

GOWD News You Can Use



April 14, 2011

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The BEST of Times

By Matthew Hughes, Director GOWD

Last month, I had the distinct honor of observing some of the brightest young minds in the state as they competed in *The Great Freight Challenge* sponsored by Friends of BEST in Alabama. For those of you who may not be familiar with the acronym, BEST stands for Boosting Engineering Science and Technology.

The mid-March competition, held at George Corley Wallace State Community College in Selma, featured teams representing more than 20 middle schools and high schools from 12 rural Alabama counties. Composed of 15 to 50 students each, the teams spent several weeks researching, developing, designing, and perfecting a robot to take part in this competition. Industry partners, teachers, and volunteers assisted in the initiative by guiding the youthful inventors in their endeavors.

Putting into practice math and science skills gained in the classroom, students quickly learned the most valuable component to success is teamwork. I was honored to deliver the opening remarks at this event and I commend the students, parents, industry leaders, and instructors at the middle and high school levels who encourage and support our future workforce. I especially thank the volunteers from the Mobile area Jubilee BEST for helping the new teams get started and for making this event possible. If competitions of this nature are any indication of the caliber of creative, innovative thinkers we have in this state, Alabama is truly in the BEST shape.



More than 20 teams participate in the opening ceremony's "Parade of Robots" at the *Great Freight Challenge* sponsored by Friends of BEST in Alabama.

Rolling Soon Into Southwest Alabama!

The Department of Postsecondary Education (DPE) has been awarded a \$4,937,950 Community- Based Job Training Grant from the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA).

In order to combat the critical shortage facing the eight county Region 9 area, community colleges serving southwest Alabama have joined forces to create a standard skill base requirement for Industrial Engineering Technology skills indicated from local companies to meet employment needs in the regional area.

Development of mobile units to meet equipment and training needs will be a primary objective of the community job

training grant. Mobile units will be built for training programs in RS Logix programmable logic controllers, hydraulics and pneumatics, instrumentation, motor controls, and commercial electrical systems

The mobile concept will provide for a single purchase of equipment versus all institutions being required to fully implement an industrial engineering technology program as an on-site program. The five mobile labs, 44-foot fifth wheel currently under construction, will enable the colleges to provide training at campus locations throughout the region.

Important Dates:

- WDCA Strategic Plans due April 29, 2011
- AMSTEC Summit May 3, 2011
- SWPC Meeting May 4, 2011
- FY12 grant applications due August 3, 2011
- State Proposal Review Committee August 24, 2011
- SWPC Meeting September 7, 2011

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The Alabama Virtual Library

The Alabama Virtual Library provides all students, teachers, and citizens of the State of Alabama with online access to essential library and information resources. It is primarily a group of online databases that have magazine, journal, and newspaper articles for research.

In most cases, a "library" card is not needed! The AVL uses geolocation tech-

nology to determine if a user is located in the state of Alabama. If the user is GeoIP authenticated then they are automatically logged in to use AVL resources. Those who are traveling, live near state borders or use an air card connection, may need an access card.

Every citizen can search topics online to acquire digital copies of books and articles, explore holdings in distant

libraries, and borrow materials through statewide interlibrary lending programs.

Statewide licensing of these resources saves more than \$12,000,000 versus individual subscriptions.

To access this great resource, visit

www.avl.lib.al.us

Chat with the Chancellor hosted by Region 8 in Opelika.

Representatives of business and industry, elected officials, chambers of commerce, economic developers, career centers, and community colleges met at the East Alabama Medical Resource Center for the WDCA Region 8 Chat with the Chancellor.

The event provided an opportunity for participants to discuss the community college's role in workforce and economic development from a regional perspective; suggestions for improving and/or expanding programs especially basic skills education; and accommodating popula-

tions in rural areas.

Dr. Freida Hill, Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System, is conducting Chat With the Chancellor forums in each of the 10 Workforce Development Councils of Alabama to identify from the regional level the perception of Alabama's two-year college system and how it can better serve local communities. The next Chat is scheduled for Region 4 on May 20 in Birmingham.



WDCA Region 8 Officers

Jay Harris is the chair for Region 8. He is HR Manager for Donaldson Company in Auburn. Mr. Harris is a member of the Auburn Training Connection, American Welding Society, and Society for Human Resources Management.

Previously, Mr. Harris worked for Russell Corporation and International Paper locations across the Southeast.

Mr. Harris received his bachelor's degree from Auburn University. He is married to Anna Harris and they have three children. Jay likes football, movies, playing with the kids, yard work, and doing building projects around the house.

Mr. Harris is a native of Thomaston, Georgia.

Kim Couch is the vice chair for Region 8. She works for Cornerstone Recruitment Group and previously was HR Manager at Hoerbiger Automotive Comfort Systems.

Kimberly has a MS in Human Resource Management and a BS in Banking and Finance, both from Troy University.

She serves as a board member at East Alabama SHRM and volunteers for Junior Achievement, School-To-Career and JAG. Kimberly also serves in various ministries in her local church.

Kimberly has been married to Russell Couch for 25 years. She enjoys outdoor activities such as watching football and baseball – War Eagle!!! and go Braves!

Mariele Fischer is the secretary for Region 8. She has been employed by the City of Auburn for 13 years, most recently with the Auburn Training Connection. Previously, she spent seven years working as a real estate agent and property manager in Auburn.

She attended Troy State University, Southern Union Community College, and Auburn University studying Early Education.

She has been married to Bob Fischer 34 years and they have two children Mrs. Fischer is a member of Saint Michael's Catholic Church in Auburn. She enjoys going to the beach, planting flowers, walking with her two dogs, and supporting and watching Auburn Tiger football!!

Alabama Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Summit to be Held May 3, 2011

AMSTEC will be hosting a summit at the Renaissance Hotel in Montgomery on May 3rd. The Summit hopes to draw business/industry leaders, education, government, and community organizations to discuss STEM programs.

STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The Summit will

identify the needs and challenges in improving STEM education for students and to enhance workforce and economic competitiveness.

The Summit will also work to identify strategies for engaging the stakeholder community, share best practices, and create a "roadmap" for the improvement of STEM

education.

Three plenary sessions will be offered featuring key leaders in economic and workforce development and education. Governor Robert Bentley will be the luncheon speaker.

Please visit www.amstec.org for an agenda and registration information.

Chambers County Career Technical Center Staff Earn CRCs

The director of the Chambers County Career Technical Center, Darin Baldwin, understands the value of his students earning a Career Readiness Certificate. However, teachers sometimes have difficulty making the connection.

Last month, 10 staff/teachers from the Chambers County CTC sat down to take the three WorkKeys assessments that are part of the Alabama Career Readiness Certificate: Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information.

The staff took two of the three assessments and then were allowed a break. The remarks from staff were "Wow, that was hard" and "We should only let a student take one of those per day".

"This was a good exercise for myself and faculty. We have a better understanding of the material and can better prepare students for the assessments," stated Mr. Baldwin.

The staff members earned seven Gold CRCs and three Silver CRCs.

Governor's Office of Workforce Development

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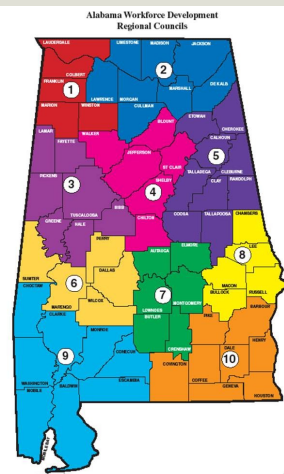
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Upcoming WDCA Meetings

- Region 1—June 14, TBA
- Region 2— May 18, Arab
- Region 3— May 12, Tuscaloosa
- Region 4— April 21, Birmingham
- Region 5— May 10, Sylacauga
- Region 6— June 30, Demopolis
- Region 7— May 26, Montgomery
- Region 8— June 22, Opelika
- Region 9— June 8, TBA
- Region 10— April 26, Dothan



The ABC's of GOWD, or What in the World Does THAT Mean?

Have you ever been in a meeting and not understood all the acronyms and abbreviations used? You are not alone!

The November spotlight in the 2011 Workforce Development Calendar are the ABC's of GOWD!

Here are a few for you to review and learn.

AJL—Alabama Job Link

AVL—Alabama Virtual Library

BEST—Boosting Engineering Science and Technology

CRC—Career Readiness Certificate

JAG—Jobs for Alabama Graduates

SHRM—Society for Human Resource Management

STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

WDCA—Workforce Development Councils of Alabama

Temporary Job Opens Door to Full-Time Opportunity for Career Center Youth Employment Participant

For the Troy Career Center, it was a proud day recently as one of their Extended Youth Work Experience Program participants excitedly told the staff she had landed a full-time job.

The 21-year-old single mother began working at the Center in October answering phones and assisting customers in the resource room. She knew it was only a temporary position because funding for the program would run out in March. But it was a start.

While assisting other people in their search for jobs through Alabama Job Link and other venues, the young woman kept an eye out for employment opportunities of her own. After following several leads and going on a number of interviews, she

was offered a job at CGI, a global information technology and business process service provider located in Troy.

"This young lady was such an asset to our Center," said Janice Grayson, Site Manager at the Troy Career Center. "We could only guarantee her a job through March, so we are thrilled she found full-time employment, and we are thrilled our Center could play a role in her success."

The Alabama Career Center System offers a wide range of services and programs both for individuals seeking jobs and for employers seeking workers. Visit <https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/> for more information.